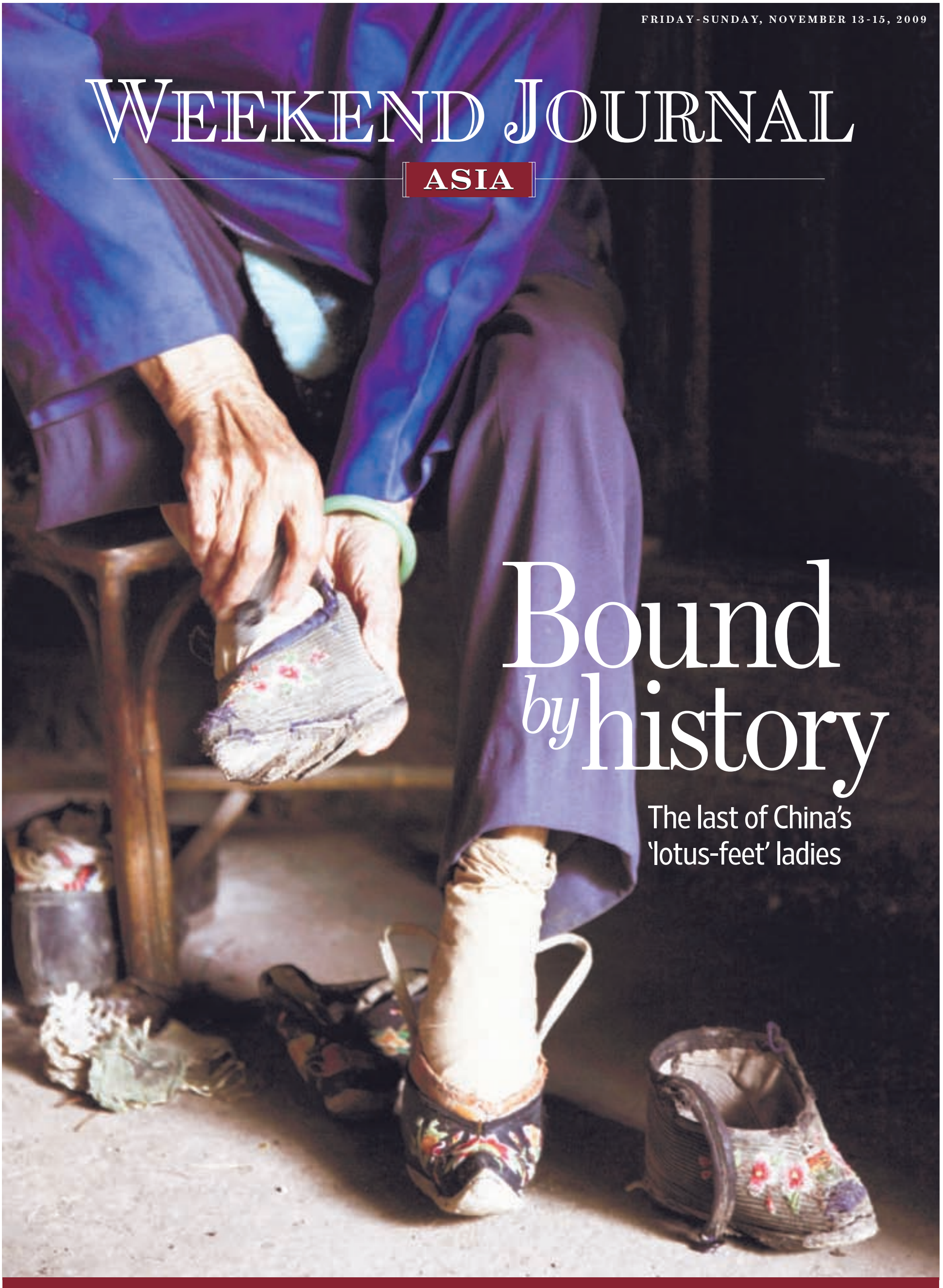
FRIDAY-SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13-15, 2009

WEEKEND JOURNAL

ASIA



Bound by history

The last of China's 'lotus-feet' ladies

Inside: A trailblazer in Yunnan

Contents

W3 | Fashion

Snood mood

W4 | Wine

A gift of Syrah;
Arbitrage price check

W5 | Sports

Why scratch means scratch;
Hideki Matsui, American hero

W6 | Travel

One hour out: Osaka

W8 | Cover story

SOCIETY

Bound by history

The last of China's 'lotus-feet' ladies

W11 | Travel

In a China explorer's footsteps

W12 | Books

The pros tell how to pen a novel

W14 | Taste

Sadder but wiser

W15 | Time Off

Art forecast in Beijing;
Flamenco in Macau;
Spanish photos in Hong Kong;
Green Day on Tour

W16 | Film

Actor Woody Harrelson gets serious

Cover: Wu Liuying changing her 'lotus' shoes (Luke Duggleby for The Wall Street Journal)
This page (left to right): Hideki Matsui (Associated Press); One hour out of Osaka (Euan McKirdy for The Wall Street Journal); A pair of 'lotus' shoes (Luke Duggleby for The Wall Street Journal); Green Day (Marina Chavez)

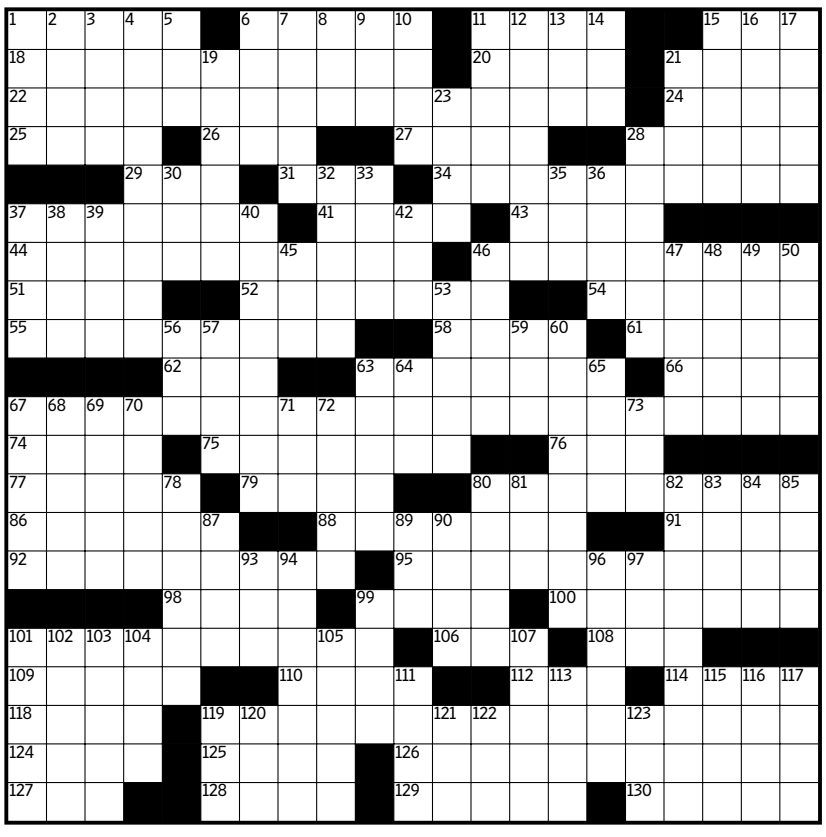
WEEKEND JOURNAL
ASIA

S. Karene Witcher Editor
Jessica Yu News graphics director
David Chan Art director
Mary E. Kissel Taste page editor
email wsjaweekend@wsj.com

A publication of
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ASIA.

THE JOURNAL CROSSWORD / Edited by Mike Shenk

Find Your Inner Child / by Elizabeth C. Gorski



Across

1 Kafka theme
6 Silent butler's catch
11 Tampa squad
15 Bit of fiction
18 Mediation pro
20 Prom night hair
21 Kenny Rogers hit
22 Its business is going through cycles
24 Reams
25 Citation abbr.
26 Some fridges
27 You can bet on it
28 Shopping cart's path
29 Class action org.?
31 Dwindle
34 Safari-inspired weekend wear
37 Kitchen spreader
41 "___ you one!"
43 Marlon's second Oscar-winning role
44 National Theatre of Japan offering
46 Features of anatomically correct dolls
51 Robert of "The Sopranos"
52 Religious collection
54 Egyptian peasant
55 They're bound for school
58 "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" libertine
61 Early American diplomat Silas
62 Maritime CIA
63 Boxster maker
66 Easy partner
67 Bento box entree
74 Peace Prize winner Walesa
75 Goes off course
76 ___ -de-sac
77 Cover, of a sort
79 Suffix in moisturizer names
80 Nutters
86 Emmy winner Tracey
88 Subsequently
91 Mixture
92 Reminder from Mom
95 Compete in the Super G
98 Mystique
99 In ___ (peevish)
100 Climbed, as a pole
101 Samoan Fog Cutter and Day Tripper, e.g.
106 Broadband option
108 Antique
109 "___ bet?"
110 Hockey trick
112 Acapulco treasure
114 Organic compound
118 Like some profs.
119 Annual fall event on Fifth Avenue
124 "...sting like ___"
125 Without ___ (daringly)
126 They may be dusted
127 Child in seven of this puzzle's longest answers
128 Important men
129 Gives the nod to
130 LPGA player's wear

Down

1 Sanctuary section
2 Like the Ger. "das"
3 Strip by the Mediterranean
4 It might be a bust
5 William Shatner's "___ War"
6 Give up
7 Pee Wee in Cooperstown
8 "___ Lazy River"
9 Pam Tillis's father
10 Sib, in dialect
11 Brewer Adolphus
12 Lift from beneath
13 401, long ago
14 Sample sauce with bread
15 Trumped-up
16 Golden boys
17 Memory measures
19 Rwanda's capital
21 Hideaway
23 Casino tool
28 Darling
30 Barbados music style
32 Tight spots
33 Lauderdale's neighbor
35 Puffed cereal brand
36 "What business is ___ yours?"
37 Cheesecake feature
38 ___ Alto
39 Harbor, perhaps
40 Touched on
42 Chinese dynasty
45 Arctic diver
46 Burrito garnish
47 Friendship 7 pilot
48 Chef Ducasse
49 Jack of "Twin Peaks"
50 Not opaque
53 Elwes and Grant
56 ___ choy (Chinese cabbage)
57 Lacking width and depth
59 Theologian who opposed Luther
60 Mexican-Americans
63 ___ ballerina
64 Product of a field of dreams?
65 Cabinet dept. since 1979
67 North Pole name
68 "___ Good" (2002 No Doubt hit)
69 Without a trace of cordiality
70 Ring leader
71 It comes before quattro
72 "Copperhead Road" singer
73 Kind
78 Lipton rival
80 Legal documents
81 Mason's aid
82 He was married to Ursula Andress and Linda Evans
83 Lena of "Chocolat"
84 Vitriol
85 "You got yourself a deal!"
87 Brain surgeon's field: Abbr.
89 Sugar meas.
90 Squeezed (out)
93 He left Maria for Jackie
94 "Big Daddy" star
96 "Did I just say that on national television?"
97 Zip
99 Puts it to
101 Refine
102 Metrical feet
103 Kicked, in a way
104 As concerns
105 "Endymion" poet
107 Like rich soil
111 Kitchen gadget brand
113 Deli slices
115 Second opening?
116 River to the Baltic
117 For fear that
119 Father figures
120 Half of bi-
121 Miff
122 Day, in Durango
123 Apt. coolers

WSJ.com

Crossword online
For an interactive version of The Wall Street Journal Crossword, WSJ.com subscribers can go to
WSJ.com/WeekendJournal

Last Week's Solution

H	A	S	H	■	O	N	T	A	P	■	A	S	C	A	P	■	P	E	T	A
A	T	M	E	■	P	E	A	B	O	■	C	H	A	I	R	■	O	X	E	N
P	S	I	S	■	E	A	T	I	N	■	H	E	L	L	O	■	S	I	L	T
P	E	T	T	Y	C	R	I	T	I	C	I	S	M	■	N	E	S	T	L	E
Y	A	H	O	O	■	■	■	■	A	P	E	■	■	W	O	R	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	N	U	T	S	■	P	R	I	V	Y	C	O	U	N	C	I	L	S
U	S	E	■	N	O	T	B	A	D	■	A	A	R	O	N	■	O	R	A	L
S	U	M	P	T	U	O	U	S	■	■	■	C	E	L	■	A	M	I	C	E
M	E	M	O	■	P	A	S	T	R	Y	C	H	E	F	■	M	I	N	E	D
C	R	E	S	S	E	T	S	■	H	E	A	T	S	■	S	I	T	A	R	S
■	■	■	I	K	E	S	■	K	O	A	N	S	■	S	A	G	A	■	■	■
S	P	A	T	E	S	■	M	I	D	S	T	■	C	O	M	A	T	O	S	E
T	I	M	I	D	■	P	O	T	A	T	O	C	H	I	P	■	U	R	N	S
O	L	A	V	S	■	A	U	K	■	■	■	A	I	S	L	E	S	E	A	T
M	A	T	E	■	S	T	R	A	P	■	E	M	C	E	E	D	■	S	P	A
P	R	I	C	E	C	O	N	T	R	O	L	S	■	E	R	G	O	■	■	■
■	■	■	H	O	R	N	■	■	A	W	E	■	■	■	■	E	S	T	E	E
A	R	M	A	N	I	■	P	R	I	N	C	E	C	H	A	R	M	I	N	G
B	E	A	R	■	P	A	R	I	S	■	T	R	O	U	T	■	O	L	E	G
L	U	N	G	■	T	R	I	P	E	■	R	I	N	G	O	■	N	E	M	O
E	P	E	E	■	S	E	X	E	S	■	A	E	S	O	P	■	D	R	Y	S

In the snood

For winter, designers wrap their hopes around a hood-cum-scarf

By Rachel Dodes

This holiday season, retailers are betting big on the snood, a cross between a scarf and a hood that, when worn over the head, is reminiscent of a babushka.

The trend emerged on the Autumn 2009 runways of designers like Missoni (knit snoods) and Burberry (plaid snoods) and also made an appearance in the commercial collections of Donna Karan and Yves Saint Laurent. Now it's gone mainstream, with retailers ranging from American Apparel to Zara getting behind the loopy style with snoods of varying lengths and monikers. The British version of GQ magazine's Web site recently posted a "Guide to Snoods," suggesting wearers try it "over a chunky knit or tailored jacket."

A few weeks ago upscale U.S. retailer Bloomingdale's urged customers to "make sure that you're seen in this lavish new accessory." Retailer Henri Bendel ranked the snood second among its top 10 "things we fancy" for autumn while Saks Fifth Avenue included it in its "Want It" autumn campaign. "Gossip Girl" star Blake Lively was photographed in one on the TV show's set last month.

Net-a-Porter.com's buying director Holli Rogers confesses she was skeptical the site would sell many snoods last summer, when the site had a month-long exclusive to sell a Burberry purple-and-black plaid style. The item is already on reorder, and the company is now pitching several styles.

Burberry, whose chief financial officer recently cited the snood as one of the top drivers of the company's autumn accessories sales, attributes the snood's rise to consumers' desire for safety in tumultuous times. "I love this idea of protection that it gives," says the brand's creative director, Christopher Bailey, who was so into the look that he showed snoods for men and women on almost every model at his autumn 2009 runway show. Simon Kneen, creative director for Gap's Banana Republic brand, also likened the accessory to "a Linus blanket," a reference to the blue security blanket always carried by the Peanuts cartoon character.

Angela Missoni, creative director of the Italian fashion label Missoni, said the look is a way to "stay true to Missoni's knitwear roots while creating something new" and calls the snood "a lavish play on layering."

"It's handy," adds Brooke Scott, Bloomingdale's fashion director for accessories, who identified snoods as one of two top holiday trends. "If you get hot, you don't have to remove it" because it can remain around the neck.

Amid the downturn, the rush to the snood reflects the fashion industry's scramble to invent new types of clothing that consumers don't already possess. Sales in the U.S. of scarves and mufflers, a relatively cheap way to freshen an outfit, have been strong, at $540 million through August, a 21% increase over the year-earlier period, according to NPD Group.

Traditional snoods, which resembled hairnets, were popular in the 1940s, when women used them to keep their long hair out of the way. In the 1950s, the snood morphed into a tube, which became a ski-slope staple, says Beth Dincuff Charleston, a professor and fashion historian at Parsons, the New School for Design in New York. This time around, the style has been transformed: The creation of snoods in colorful plaids, fur and prints, as opposed to just polar fleece, renders them "new and fresh," says Ms. Dincuff.

As much as they love its look, many retailers, particularly in the U.S., aren't as in love with the snood's name, which can sound more like a Dr. Seuss character than a hot fashion item. Designer Chan Luu sells "infinity loops"; American Apparel hawks "circle scarves" and Banana Republic pitches an "infinity scarf" as does the Limited, which offers its scarves in 12 colors. The word snood "sounds like something that has been woken out of sleep," says Banana Republic's Mr. Kneen. An infinity scarf "is an endless piece that's timeless with a twist."

Burberry's Mr. Bailey is sticking with snood. "It's a very British name for it, which feels more relevant to what inspired us and to what we stand for," he says.

Rachel Kirson, a 24-year-old teacher from New Jersey, says she got her first glimpse of the snood in a magazine. "I have fallen in love with them," says Ms. Kirson, who has been looking for a snood in charcoal-gray with a horizontal cable knit for herself; she is planning on giving snoods as gifts for the holidays.

Top: Missoni ribbed-knit mohair snood, $265; below left to right, Burberry snood, $295; Banana Republic infinity cable scarf, $140; Zara cowl neck collar, $29.90

Catwalking/Getty Images (Missoni, Burberry); Banana Republic; Zara; Bendel's (Ash & Dan)

So many snoods

A quick tour through some of the fashion industry's latest offerings

Burberry
$295 for its popular "check" snood in cashmere
Burberry, credited with reigniting the trend, also has versions in wool, mink and rabbit fur.

Missoni
$265 for a ribbed snood that can wrap around the head twice
The company is offering five snood styles in different colors and fabrics.

Chan Luu
$125 for a paisley viscose "infinity loop" at Saks Fifth Avenue
The designer also has tie-dye versions in various color combinations for $75.

Ash & Dans ▸
$110 for this infinity scarf, which comes with a brooch, at Henri Bendel
Henri Bendel says that embellished scarves are selling best; these range in price from $110 to $150.

Banana Republic
$98 for a cashmere infinity scarf that can be wrapped around the head three times
The retailer is unveiling a range of these scarves in various fabrics, textures and colors for the holidays.

American Apparel
$28 for a solid-color "circle scarf" in different materials
For the holidays, the company is adding print versions of this style.

Donna Karan
$695 cashmere infinity scarf
The designer's DKNY line has infinity styles priced from $95 to $225.

JB 1735
BLANCPAIN
MANUFACTURE DE HAUTE HORLOGERIE
"Fifty Fathoms Automatique"
(ref. 5015-3630-52)
BOUTIQUES BLANCPAIN
ABU DHABI • BANGKOK • BEIJING • CANNES • DUBAI • GENEVA • HONG KONG
MACAU • MADRID • MANAMA • MOSCOW • MUMBAI • MUNICH • NEW YORK
PARIS • SHANGHAI • SINGAPORE • TAIPEI • TOKYO • ZURICH
WWW.BLANCPAIN.COM

Yes, Syrah

This year's gift idea: a global case showing the grape's many styles

By Dorothy J. Gaiter and John Brecher

Hector Sanchez for The Wall Street Journal

Every year around this time, we recommend one special gift that will require some effort (which is why we're writing about it now) and some money (but not nearly as much as a few years ago). Last year, we suggested a mixed case of Beaujolais. We heard from quite a few people who loved that suggestion, but none more than Amy Wilson Grace of Massachusetts, who wrote us just before Christmas to say: "I always have a hard time finding something interesting for my husband for Christmas and this seemed to be something fun that the two of us could share. What I didn't expect is how much fun I've had putting together the gift." Along with the wine, she prepared a booklet on the Beaujolais region and winemakers' notes for each of the bottles in the gift case.

If you think you might be interested in the case of Beaujolais—not Nouveau—drop us a note at wine@wsj.com and we will send along that column. But if you are looking for something new, here it is:

A mixed case of Syrah from all over the world. You really couldn't find a more delicious and fashionable present than this.

Syrah is hardly a new thing. It has been one of the world's great grapes for a very long time, especially prominent in the Rhône Valley of France. But Australia's success with Shiraz, its name for Syrah, has given the grape a boost. Now it seems it is grown everywhere—and grown well, too. There is not a more exciting wine on shelves right now, for instance, than Syrah from Washington state.

Consumption of U.S. Syrah has soared over the past few years, and plantings in California have almost tripled in a decade. Even in the Santa Barbara area, made famous for Pinot Noir by "Sideways," we're amazed how many winemakers and other local experts have whispered to us that they're really more excited about their Syrah right now.

Syrah generally has a meaty, peppery, sometimes lusty taste, but it can be made in so many different styles that it's impossible to give one description, which is exactly why this case is so much fun. Experts and novices alike would enjoy seeing how different visions and different terroirs make for Syrahs that are distinctive yet inevitably have much in common.

So here is an idea for a tour of the world entirely based on the Syrah grape. This can cost anywhere from about $150 on up if you get 12 bottles, but a half-case would be a fine present, too. You will have to work with at least a couple of good merchants to make this happen because few will have all 12. This is also easier than ever to do because of some excellent wine Web sites. If, for example, you go to klwines.com, you can sort the available stock by grape type (you might have to look separately under Syrah and Shiraz) and then see a list of all of the various countries where the wines are from. If you do shop that way, though, be careful. Sometimes that type of sorting also includes wines that just have small amounts of Syrah or that say somewhere in the description that "this tastes like Syrah." Make sure you are really buying a wine that's made primarily from Syrah.

Ready? Here's one possible case. The prices are approximate.

1) Other. We know it's odd to begin with "other," but it's important to keep your eyes open for this category, because it's one of the most important parts of the case. Syrah is being made well so widely these days that you might find one from just about anywhere, and the more surprising, the better. While we were shopping over the past few weeks, we found one from Morocco and one from Uruguay, and we really enjoyed them. Figure about $15, but you might do better. The wine from Uruguay (Domaine Monte de Luz 2007), for instance, was $8.

2) Sparkling Shiraz. Sparkling red wine might make you think about Cold Duck, which may not be a pleasant memory, but sparkling Shiraz from Australia really can be quite charming—drier than you think, with a core of black-cherry tastes. This can be hard to find in stores, which don't know whether to stock it with the bubblies or with the Australians, but look closely. This will likely be $15 to $20.

3) Rosé Syrah. These will probably be in the rosé aisle; be sure to get a young one. In our most recent broad tasting of American rosé, one of our favorites was Lewis "Vin Gris" Syrah (about $25), and there are others out there if you look around. Not long ago we picked one up from Sicily (Planeta, $15). Syrah rosé can be full-bodied, good with all sorts of food.

4 and 5) Two Shirazes from Australia, at different price points. Pick up one of the very common examples that cost $10 or so, such as Penfolds "Koonunga Hill," and also a less-common name, such as Pirramimma, that costs around $20. It'll be fun to discover in what ways they taste different.

6) A Syrah/Shiraz from South Africa. We think there's a chance that South African Syrah (often called Shiraz) might be a pretty big thing in the next couple of years. We are seeing more of them on shelves these days and their average quality is excellent, especially considering the very reasonable prices. Indaba and Brampton are two names you might see ($10 to $14), and they are quite reliable. If you see more than one, we'd suggest getting two of these and then perhaps only one of Nos. 10 and 11 below.

7) Syrah from France. If you are lucky, you can find a wine simply labeled "Syrah" from somewhere in France, probably the Languedoc. This is likely to be an easy-drinking carafe wine that will cost less than $15. If you can't find one, you might have to break the bank a bit to get a Crozes-Hermitage, which is made from Syrah in the Rhône. It will likely cost $20 to $35. St. Joseph is also made from Syrah, but we haven't had great luck with it recently. Of course, for a splurge, go with Côte-Rotie, which will be a marvelous surprise, but likely cost $60 or more. In any event, if you include a Crozes-Hermitage, it will be a very interesting addition to the case—more challenging, brawnier than any other wine in the case and quite a contrast to the more-gulpable wines.

8) Syrah from Chile or Argentina. Like so many wines from Chile and Argentina today, these are well-made and surprisingly affordable. Concha y Toro makes good ones that start at $9.99 for a 1.5-liter bottle.

9) A Syrah from California. Heaven knows there are a million of them, at all price points, from classics like Qupe to more-obscure labels like Donkey & Goat. Plan to spend about $20, though you can sometimes find winners like Cline for less than $10.

10 and 11) Two Shirazes from California. The point you are making here is that California has both Syrah and Shiraz and they're the same grape—but can taste different. In general—and, of course, there are many exceptions—Shiraz is less expensive and less serious. In fact, the reason we're suggesting two of these is to keep the cost down. Barefoot Cellars Shiraz, for instance, is delightful, almost like Beaujolais, and only about $5.99; it's best with a chill.

12) Washington Syrah. To us, this is the big daddy of the case because we are so pumped about these wines right now. Some of these can be expensive—$50 or so—but there are also quite a few around for less than $20. There is a special depth, vibrancy and excitement in these wines at the moment, and everyone should try them. To be able to sample one against all of the other examples in this case would be a special treat.

We understand this will take some time and trouble, not to mention money. Is it worth it? We asked Amy's husband, Evan Grace, how he enjoyed last year's mixed case of Beaujolais, which ultimately grew to 16 bottles. He replied: "Both the wines and the concept were terrific.

"Like many, I knew little about Beaujolais wines, having sampled exactly one non-Nouveau over the years. The tasting remedied that quickly, thanks to your idea and Amy's execution. Amy learned a ton doing the research and creating the notes, and I learned a ton doing the tasting and reading her notes. Win-win.

"It also created two wonderful social situations. Even at our best, Amy and I would find sampling 16 wines side-by-side a tad challenging, so we brought in reinforcements. We had some friends over for New Year's Eve and opened eight of the bottles, which was just about right for the size of the crowd. It went over so well that we invited the same group back, plus a few more hangers-on, for the remaining eight bottles. If there's a better excuse for inviting a bunch of people over to drink wine in February, I don't know what it is.

"All in all, a very inventive and fun gift that kept on giving until the snow melted."

Arbitrage

Tripp Trapp Stokke highchair

City	Currency	US$
London	£103	$172
Brussels	€148	$222
Frankfurt	€150	$225
Rome	€155	$232
Paris	€169	$253
New York		$271
Hong Kong	HK$2,272	$293
Kuala Lumpur	1,080 ringgit	$319
Singapore	S$519	$374
Shanghai	2,680 yuan	$393

Natural finish

Prices, including taxes, as provided by centrally located retailers in each city, averaged and converted to the nearest U.S. dollar.

Tripp Trapp

The impossible dream

Why 40-something duffers' senior-tour fantasies are just that

Golf Journal
JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

One of my favorite golf stories involves Tinsley Penick, the retired head pro at Austin Country Club in Texas and son of legendary instructor Harvey Penick. About a dozen years ago, he was approached in the pro shop by a nonmember seeking instruction. "I'm 48 years old," the man said. "I've got all the money I'll ever need and want to concentrate on my golf game for the next two years so I can qualify for the Senior Tour when I turn 50."

"That's an amazing coincidence," Mr. Penick said. "I know another person who's 48, who has all the money he'll ever need and is concentrating on his golf game to get ready for the Senior Tour. He's outside right now. Would you like to meet him? His name is Tom Kite." Mr. Kite, of course, is a 19-time PGA Tour winner and former U.S. Open champion.

I've heard this story so many times over the years, I felt obliged to check its authenticity last week with Mr. Penick, and he confirmed it. (They went looking for Mr. Kite, he said, but he'd already left.) What gives it legs, as they say in the movie business, is the way it so effortlessly deflates one of golf's most ubiquitous fantasies, namely that with just a little devotion practically anyone could compete with the pros.

Golf stokes such fantasies because on any given shot, an average player can accidentally manufacture a result as good as the best pros can manage. Not 310-yard drives, maybe, but a seven iron that stops right next to the hole. We can even put together a long stretch of holes, sometimes a full round, in which every ball heads right where it's supposed to, every putt falls. This is when our imaginations soar: If only we could practice and play golf all the time, we think, why couldn't we be as good as the pros? It's so easy!

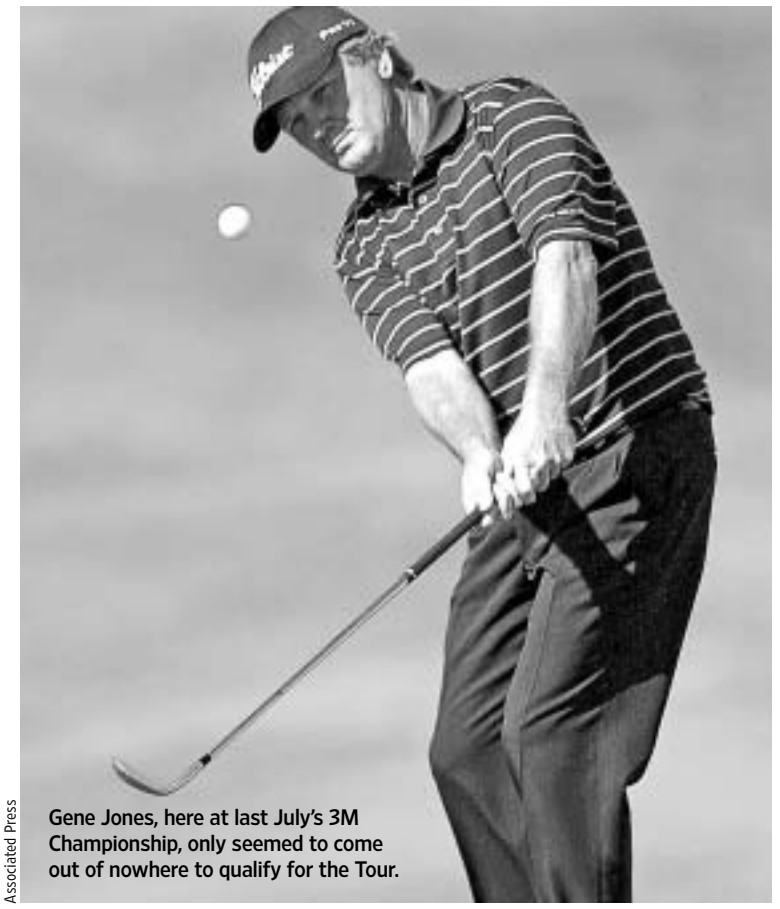
I know because I once succumbed to such a fantasy, sort of, and wrote a book, "The Fine Green Line," about my experience in the trenches of the regional minor-league pro circuits known as minitours. I never thought I could actually make the Tour, but I did think I would get a lot better with a year of focused practice and competition. I discovered that, even on the minitours, the top players were far, far better than everyday players imagine, that tournament golf and recreational golf are completely different beasts and that, when it comes to significantly improving at golf, a year is absolutely nothing.

Other books have explored this territory, and recently I've discovered seekers in other media. Several bloggers are posting accounts of their odyssey. The Golf Channel has broadcast series on midlife golfers attempting makeovers, most notably basketball's Charles Barkley working with Tiger Woods's instructor, Hank Haney. A filmmaker from California named Jon Fitzgerald recently completed a fine documentary, not yet commercially released, about his chase, called "The Back Nine."

The oddest and most successful of these quests I know of was mounted by American Reid Sheftall, a surgeon who founded a charity clinic for children in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. When a course opened near the city in 2003, Mr. Sheftall, 53, decided to re-engage with golf after 28 years away. His book, "Striking it Rich: Golf in the Kingdom, with Generals, Patients, and Pros," details his work with burn victims, high-stakes golf matches with military brass and his earning a card on the Malaysian PGA Tour. In September, Mr. Sheftall emailed, he actually won a pro tournament.

Last week the first stage of the qualifying process for the PGA Champions Tour (formerly known as the Senior Tour) got underway. Players do occasionally emerge from nowhere to make it, the most colorful of all being Robert Landers, a Texas dairy farmer who trained by hitting balls in his pastures and qualified for the 1995 Tour while wearing sneakers. For 2005, a beer-truck driver named Mark W. Johnson qualified and almost immediately won the Toshiba Classic. Two players without elite PGA Tour pedigrees who have qualified since and done well enough to keep their cards are Mike Goodes and Gene Jones Jr. This year, Mr. Goodes, 53, won the Allianz Championship and finished 24th on the money list. Mr. Jones. 52, had eight top-10 finishes and ranked 12th.

But none of these were Johnny-come-latelies to golf. Mr. Landers qualified for the U.S. Open as long ago as 1980. Mr. Johnson, even as he drove his Budweiser truck, was a dominant presence in elite California amateur events. Mr. Goodes had a similar background in North Carolina.



Associated Press

Gene Jones, here at last July's 3M Championship, only seemed to come out of nowhere to qualify for the Tour.

As for Mr. Jones, I got to know him in 1992 when he was the leading money-winner on the now-defunct Space Coast Tour in Florida. He was, essentially, a lifelong minitour player. That autumn he qualified for the regular PGA Tour, but made only seven cuts in 20 tournaments in 1993 (total earnings: $24,522) and headed back to the minitours.

"It was frustrating, but I never gave up. If you work hard and work smart, I guess you can do just about anything," Mr. Jones said in a phone interview. From 2005 to 2007, he played in every event on the Sun Belt Tour in the Southeast for men 47 and older, and was again the leading money-winner. "Without competition, you can't expect to pop out on the Champions Tour and compete against guys who have been playing at that level for 25 years," he said.

Once he made it to the Champions Tour, he said he was initially intimidated, not just by the galleries and TV cameras but by competing against men, like Tom Watson, who had been his heroes. But now that he's settled in and is plugging away as he used to the minitours—he earned $1.1 million in 2009 and didn't miss a cut—his years of effort seem more than worthwhile.

"It's better than you can possibly imagine. I still have to pinch myself," he said. For one guy, at least, the dream came true. But it's worth noting that for Mr. Jones, the dream began in boyhood, not at age 48.

Major-league hit

Hideki Matsui opens a new era for Japanese baseball

By Darren Everson

When Hideki Matsui of the New York Yankees won the World Series most-valuable-player award after driving in six runs in its sixth and deciding game, it marked a milestone in global sports. It showed that Japanese baseball players—often known in the U.S. for novel swings, tornado pitching windups and unorthodox workout routines—can also become an American team's indispensable center.

"It's the crowning achievement of Japanese baseball," says Robert Whiting, the author of several books about Japanese baseball and contemporary culture.

"It's poetic justice," adds Bobby Valentine, a former manager in the U.S. major leagues who has spent the past six seasons managing in Japan. "And out there, they love poetry." Mr. Matsui's heroics came on a Wednesday night in New York, just in time to make the front pages of Japan's Thursday evening newspapers, which all noted that he was the first Japanese World Series MVP.

The first Japanese player to reach the majors was Masanori Murakami, a pitcher who made his debut with the San Francisco Giants in 1964. He came to the U.S. because his Japanese team wanted some of its youngsters to get experience in the U.S. minor leagues. He excelled in the minors and pitched well for the Giants, but a contractual dispute forced him to return.

"They all wanted to play in the major leagues in those days, but the teams had total control over them," says Jim Lefebvre, a former major-leaguer and manager who played in Japan in the 1970s. "They knew their dreams would never be fulfilled."

That changed in 1995, when Hideo Nomo joined the Los Angeles Dodgers after "retiring" to gain his freedom. Mr. Nomo—whose unusual windup flummoxed many hitters—led the National League in both strikeouts and wild pitches and was named Rookie of the Year.

Several Japanese players have since made it to the majors, experienced success and won huge salaries. Mariners outfielder Ichiro Suzuki has been a perennial All Star. The Boston Red Sox paid $103 million for Daisuke Matsuzaka, who has a .638 winning percentage in three seasons, and the Chicago Cubs gave outfielder Kosuke Fukudome a four-year, $48-million contract. The last five World Series winners have had at least one Japanese player on their roster.

Some Japanese players have fallen short. In 2005, Norihiro Nakamura, considered the premier third baseman in Japan, hit just .128 for the Los Angeles Dodgers, lasting all of 17 games. Japanese middle infielders, unaccustomed to having base runners try to knock them over during double-play attempts, have struggled. Pitchers Hideki Irabu and Kei Igawa were costly bombs for the Yankees, and catcher Kenji Johjima, after two weak-hitting seasons, recently walked away from the $16 million the Mariners owed him so he could go back to Japan and play.

Associated Press

Hideki Matsui draws a crowd last week to a store window in Japan.

Even Mr. Matsui hasn't been all that scouts had hoped for. A superstar for 10 seasons in Japan, Mr. Matsui hit 50 home runs for the Yomiuri Giants in 2002. But since joining the Yankees in 2003, he has topped 30 home runs only once. He'd been solid but unspectacular in the postseason. But his performance in this World Series—three home runs and eight runs batted in—elevated him to a different league. "I could just see Asia going completely crazy," says Mr. Lefebvre. "All the Japanese players will be sticking their chests out a little bit."

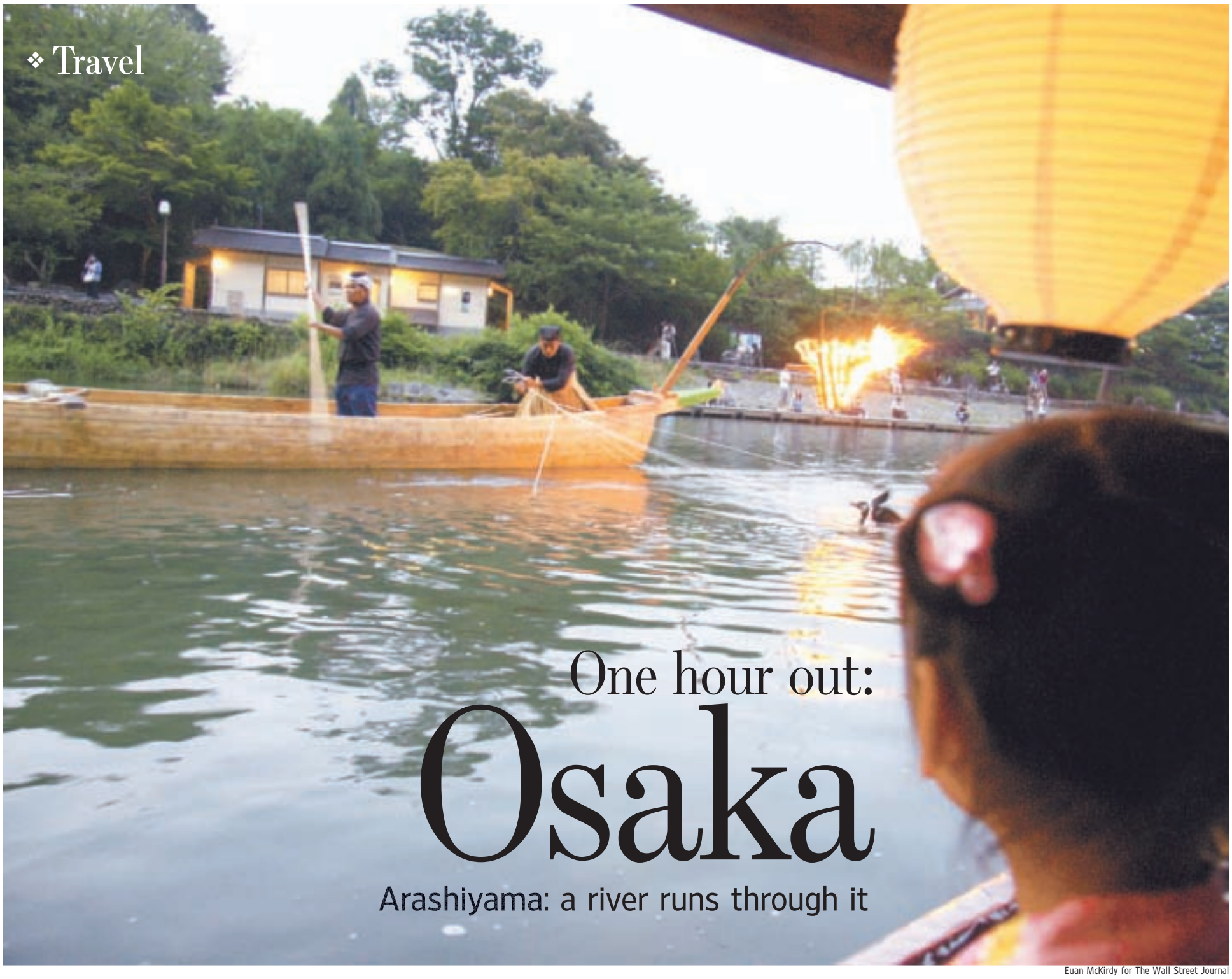
Mr. Matsui's historic game six performance could be his last as a Yankee. His contract is expiring. Analysts figure the Yankees, trying to get younger, won't retain both the 35-year-old Mr. Matsui and 36-year-old Johnny Damon, and give Mr. Damon the edge because he can still play in the outfield. Mr. Matsui's wobbly knees have relegated him to the designated-hitter role. Arn Tellem, Mr. Matsui's agent, said that while his client prefers to stay with the Yankees, he's weighing his options.

While the Yankees have paid Mr. Matsui $52 million the past four years, the investment seems to have more than paid for itself. The Yankees have been able to generate nearly $20 million a year in marketing and sponsorship revenue from Japanese companies, according to a person familiar with the deals.

It's not clear that the Yankees will lose money if Mr. Matsui leaves. The team has been a popular brand in Japan since Babe Ruth toured the country in 1934. It has about six Japanese sponsors and has expanded its reach in the country by establishing a joint-marketing relationship with the Yomiuri Giants and opening an office in Tokyo. "There will come a day when Hideki Matsui is not on the Yankees, and that day might be next season," says Marc Ganis, a sports-industry consultant who has worked with the team. "But don't be surprised if the team has a strategy for that, too."

Whatever happens, Mr. Matsui's MVP award seems to mark the end of one chapter in the history of Japanese players and the beginning of another. And Japanese baseball fans, who have followed every step of Mr. Matsui's career with overwhelming interest, aren't stunned by the idea that one of their own could become a great team's center of gravity. "It's about time, that's what they think," says Mr. Valentine.

David Biderman, Matthew Futterman and Peter Landers contributed to this article.



Euan McKirdy for The Wall Street Journal

A young tourist watches cormorants fishing on the river, above; inset below, Japanese maple leaves turning shades of red

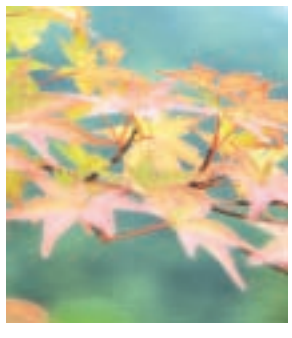
One hour out: Osaka

Arashiyama: a river runs through it

By Euan McKirdy

When it rains, as the old adage says, it pours. That's certainly true in the riverside town of Arashiyama, whose name aptly translates as Storm Mountain. With little warning, maybe one peal of thunder, water bombs start raining down, pelting the streets, the woods, the bridge and the river, exploding pellets that can drench you fast.

But the rains finish as abruptly as they begin, and if you duck into some shelter—say, a riverside restaurant for a sake or beer—the interior calm can provide a moment of contemplative silence, surrounded by the all-encompassing sound of the deluge. And you're in no hurry; the pace here is slow.



Another in a series of articles seeking to answer the question, When a traveler has had about enough of the jingle-jangle of the urban jungle, can relief be just an hour away?

From Osaka's Hankyu Umeda station it's a 48-minute ride to Hankyu Arashiyama station, last stop on the short line that branches off Hankyu railway's main Osaka-Kyoto artery; change trains at Katsura. A short distance away, the picturesque Togetsukyo bridge signals the start of the town, which is a district, or satellite, of Kyoto City.

The bridge, which rather poetically reads as "Moon Crossing Bridge" in English, was originally built in the Kamakura period (1185–1333), though it has since been reconstructed with some concrete. It sums up much of what Arashiyama has come to mean for the Japanese—a place of striking natural beauty, and a symbol of a more genteel time. (In a modern twist, part of the river's power is harnessed and turned into hydroelectricity for lighting the way across the bridge.)

The mountain that gives the area its name is a powerful presence, changing through the seasons—fountains of cherry blossoms in the spring, lush and green in the summer and a living palette of color, from the most delicate of yellows to deep rust hues, as the leaves change in autumn. Its beauty moved future Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, in his student days in Japan, to pen four poems immortalized decades later by being carved in stone in Arashiyama's Kameyma Park, in a monument known as "Arashiyama in the rain."

Trails off the riverside path climb the surrounding hills, giving way to breathtaking views high above the river and the faint sound of rushing water. Down below, rowboats can be hired from either bank, generally for around 1,600 yen (about $18) for an hour. The current isn't too forcible, but it will drag you downstream if you don't keep up your strokes. The ford that breaks up the river just upstream from the bridge is a staging post for the Japanese heron that fish the waters.

One of Arashiyama's less peaceful hikes goes up a neighboring mountain (really more a fairly steep hill) to Iwatayama Monkey Park, home to an estimated 160 Japanese macaques. They are regarded as wild, in that they are not held captive here—except by the regular feedings by staff and visitors alike. These mountaintop residents are so used to human presence that they never blink an eye, although the park's staff urge some basic rules of engagement. It's a vigorous climb of about 20 minutes from the entrance, close to the bridge on the left bank, but the summit affords some fairly spectacular views of Kyoto City to the west, particularly toward the evening, as dusk begins to tinge the city and lights come on. The park closes around 5 p.m., and entry costs 500 yen (about $5.50).

Not all the activities in Arashiyma require climbing or rowing. There are rickshaw pullers eager to cart visitors around the streets, and from March through December, a tourist train wends its way along the riverbank from Arashiyama Torokko station to nearby Kameoka. The relaxed, 25-minute journey upstream in charming glass-roofed rail cars offers excellent views of the river and the surrounding mountains. The usual return trip, taking a little longer—90 minutes—is a serene ride downriver on a 30-person boat.

Like the bridge that forms the town's centerpiece, much of Arashiyama's architecture recalls traditional Japanese

Clockwise from the top: The Togetsukyo bridge spans the Katsura River; a pair of stone animals flank a traditional Japanese farmhouse in the hills surrounding Arashiyama; a custodian sweeps in front of sake barrels at the Matsuo-taisha shrine; the shrine's front

styles. Vying for space with traditional restaurants and teahouses, *ryokan* (traditional inns) and famous *onsen* (hot springs—these include Arashiyama Benkei and Togetsu-tei, which are also ryokans) is a wealth of old temples and shrines such as Tenryuji and Jojakkoji, as well as Rakushisha, the simple cottage home of 17th-century poet Kyorai Mukai.

Sake, or *nihonshu*, a particular specialty of many of the inns and restaurants that line the river and the town, is also the specialty of one of the shrines. Dedicated to the god of sake, Matsuo-taisha is a spot of pilgrimage for many of Kyoto's numerous sake brewers, who come to pray for good fortune and to receive the blessing of the shrine's priests. It's near the penultimate stop of the train from Katsura to Arashiyama, the Matsuo station, which takes its name from the shrine.

Traditions die hard throughout Kyoto, but particularly here. As night falls and the riverside lights begin to twinkle on, fishermen put on a display of one of Japan's most storied old-time practices, using cormorants in their quest for the small fish that populate the Katsura River.

These days it's really all about catching tourists—a line of around 10 boats, filled with a largely Japanese crowd—watch the fishing vessels at work. But it's quite a show. Beating drums to "wake the fish," the boats skim along the river, a gaggle of cormorants tethered to the boat by a thin cord. By the light of a fearsome basket of fire hanging from the back of the boat, these sleek birds dive under the surface and catch the fish, before being unceremoniously yanked aboard by their masters and forced to disgorge the fish—a slim band around each bird's neck prevents them from swallowing the prize.

Euan McKirdy is a writer based in Hong Kong.

THE ASCOTT GROUP

A Member of CapitaLand

The One hour out series is sponsored by The Ascott Group, a member of CapitaLand, is the largest global serviced residence owner-operator in Asia Pacific, Europe and the Gulf region, managing the *Ascott, Somerset* and *Citadines* brands in over 60 cities across 22 countries.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF DEFINING GLOBAL LIVING

The Ascott Group invites you to celebrate its 25th anniversary with special promotions for stays till 31 December 2009. From its beginnings as Asia Pacific's first branded serviced residence in 1984, to its distinction as the world's largest serviced residence owner-operator today, there is an Ascott serviced residence designed to make you feel at home. **Because life is about living.**

For bookings or more information on our 25th Anniversary promotions and Grand Draw, call our global reservations at (65) 6272 7272 or visit www.the-ascott.com/25anniversary

ASCOTT THE RESIDENCE · SOMERSET SERVICED RESIDENCE · Citadines APART'HOTEL

THE ASCOTT GROUP
Celebrating
25 Years
Of Sterling Moments With You

- Enjoy celebratory offers in over 25 cities from now till 31 December 2009*
- Book by 31 December 2009 to enjoy 1 FREE night for every month's stay*
- Stand a chance to win FREE stays for 25 years*

*Terms and conditions apply.

Bound *by* history

The last of China's 'lotus-feet' ladies

By Simon Montlake

Liuyi Village, Yunnan Province

In a courtyard of her crumbling house, Wu Liuying lifts her favorite pair of shoes from a dusty cardboard box. Hand-sewn from navy-blue cloth, embroidered with pink flowers, they are no bigger than a small child's slippers.

But they slip easily over the gnarled shrunken feet of the 90-year-old Ms. Wu. From the age of 5, her feet were bound tightly with cotton strips, warping them. The four smallest toes folded under the sole, which was squeezed into a high arch, creating a crevasse between the heel and the ball of the foot.

Hers was among the last of countless generations of Chinese women who bound their feet in search of an idealized form of beauty. Though banned in 1912 after the Qing dynasty fell and the Nationalists established a republic, the practice lingered, especially in remote areas of China. A 1928 census in rural Shanxi province found that 18% of women had bound feet; binding also hung on in Liuyi, in the frontier province of Yunnan.

"When the Nationalists came here we would undo our feet in the daytime," says Ms. Wu. "Then, in the night, we would bind them again."

In time the Communist government, which took power in 1949, succeeded in stigmatizing foot-binding as backward and shameful. Today, like Ms. Wu's tumbledown house—where cobwebs cloak the rotted eaves—the millennium-old custom is slipping into history. Few of the elderly survivors care to try to explain to their grandchildren how they came to wear such dainty shoes, the agony they endured and what exactly was so sexy about a 10-centimeter foot that—being hard to clean—usually gave off a tangy smell and was prone to decay.

"It's out of fashion now," says Ms. Wu.

A symbol of China's past, foot-binding still exerts a pull on scholars, and collectors of "lotus" shoes scour the countryside for antique pairs. (The shoes were named for the lotus bulb that the foot was supposed to resemble after one form of binding; regional variations included the less-severe "cucumber" foot, which folded the four toes under but didn't force up the heel and taper the ankle.) The scholars and collectors both come mainly from outside China; the country's own official histories lack much interest in lotus feet.

While foot-binding stands out for its longevity, the history of fashion is full of obsessions, says John Vollmer, a New York-based expert on Asian costumes and curator of past exhibitions on Chinese erotica. He points out that the Westerners appalled by foot-binding a century ago included women who wore rib-crushing whale-bone corsets to effect an hourglass figure. "What we think of as sexy parts of the body, like cinched waists or feet in stiletto heels, are not without health consequences," he says.

The first women in China to bind their feet probably lived in the court of Li Houzhu, who ascended the throne of the southern Tang kingdom in 961. A dancer who wrapped her naturally slender feet in silk, as a ballet dancer would, was said to have inspired others to experiment. Men began to glorify the form.

But foot-binding is not just about the cruelty and fetishism of an extreme fashion. There's also a puzzle: Why was a practice that seems suited only to the rich and idle also adopted over the centuries by peasant women who toiled under the threat of famine?

"It went from being part of the highest echelon of society to being widespread," says Mr. Vollmer. "Almost every class of woman had some kind of foot-binding." Even farmers were said to turn up their noses at regular-size feet, so peasant mothers bound their daughters' feet to improve their marriage prospects.

Why a half-crippled woman was considered a catch to prospective rural husbands is a point of dispute among experts. One theory is that foot-binding among commoners was motivated by dreams of marrying up. But Melissa Brown, an assistant professor of anthropology at Stanford University, says her surveys of bound-foot women found that only a

Ninety-year-old Wu Liuying at home in Liuyi village, right; her feet, left, were bound with cotton strips starting when she was 5 years old.

Luke Duggleby for The Wall Street Journal

Left to right, the feet of Wang Guifeng, 78, of Liuyi village, a pair of her shoes, and how her feet contrast with a neighbor's

small proportion married someone of a higher class. About half married into the same class and some ended up in a poorer household. She's among the scholars who contend that—strange as it sounds—rural foot-binding was driven by economics. It forced girls and women to work at home, spinning yarn, processing tea and shucking oysters.

"How do you get a naturally healthy 6-year-old to sit for hours? You break her feet," Prof. Brown says. For Chinese mothers seeking fertile, hard-working girls for their sons to marry, bound feet meant obedience and restraint.

"Footbinding did not spread because (of) men's erotic interest," Stanford anthropologist Hill Gates wrote in a 2007 paper. The books and art held up as examples of foot fetishism, these scholars say, would have been for the literate minority, and so are a poor gauge of mass beliefs.

The economic logic for binding started to unravel when machine-made cotton yarn became widely available in the early 20th century, coinciding with a bust in tea prices. At the same time, abolitionist movements began in prosperous coastal regions, initially led by foreign missionaries. At public rallies, women were urged to burn their foot-binding cloths. Activists composed "letting-feet-out" songs.

It would take decades. One of the last in Liuyu to let out her feet was the mother of Yang Yang, a historian whose 2001 book "Dancing With Little Feet" tells the stories of his mother and other bound-feet village women. His mother, who died in 2005, managed to hide from government inspectors until 1958.

A decade ago, as many as 300 bound-feet women lived in Liuyi. Today, only 20 to 30 are left, says Mr. Yang. His memoir takes its title from the swaying gait produced by the pinched feet and atrophied muscles, as well as from the folk-dancing troupe that the women formed in the 1980s. Entering local dance contests against female groups with regular-size feet, the bound-feet women eventually became a tourist attraction. Dwindling numbers and mobility led to its demise in 2005.

Pi Guiqiong, a sprightly 71-year-old woman, hasn't forgotten her moves. On a recent afternoon, she rigged up a tape player in the neatly-swept courtyard of her house. As the screechy music began, she mimed the song's actions: sowing rice, feeding chickens, playing with a child. Finally she pulled out an iridescent pink scarf that she flourished around her as she twirled.

Mr. Yang watched in delight. His mother and Ms. Pi used to enjoy dancing together; both had "half-small feet" that gave them more flexibility than women whose feet were bound

Shoes made by Luo Guiying await tourist buyers in Tuanshan.

Xiong Xiufeng, left, and Zhu Xiaoquiong, out and about a bit, with the ancient Tuanshan town gate in the background

Luke Duggleby for The Wall Street Journal

more tightly. "Some of the big-foot women can't dance as well as I can," Ms. Pi laughs.

Born to a family of farmers, Ms. Pi got married at age 15. Her husband, a tin miner, had told her that her feet were beautiful. But he changed his mind after serving in the People's Liberation Army. Not long after the wedding, he told her it was time to unbind them.

Ms. Pi was keen. Her mother, however, argued long and hard against it. Like many women in the village she thought that the ban would be temporary and that women who let out their feet would regret it.

This resistance to change, as well as the role of women themselves in perpetuating foot-binding, suggests how complex the custom was, says Dorothy Ko, a professor of Chinese history at Columbia University in New York and author of several studies on the subject. "It's been done by your mother and your grandmother," she says. "It's a definition of how to be a woman."

In the end, Ms. Pi's husband got his way, and Ms. Pi released her feet from their binding. After several days of painful swelling, she got used to walking on them again.

When Communist officials ordered women to begin working in the fields, those who had once been praised for their dainty shoes found themselves being scolded. A sense of humiliation lingers among Liuyi's bound-feet women, who recall not being able to walk as fast nor carry as much as younger women who hadn't bound their feet. Some women, like Ms. Pi, were able to release their partially bound feet, but millions of others were stuck.

"I wanted to undo my feet. But they had become fixed into their tiny shape, so I couldn't," says Wang Huiyuan, 89, sitting on a bench in her son-in-law's house.

"I couldn't catch up with the other workers," she says. "They were much more productive than us. I felt very ashamed." She was unable to work in wet rice paddies in her cloth shoes (peasants usually go barefoot).

Married at 12, she had stayed at home to dye and weave cloth and support her husband, a trader. Five days after they married, Ms. Wang unwrapped her feet for the first time in front of her husband, Pu Yuengao. It was, he recalls, a "beautiful sight." But he's at a loss for words to explain the attraction.

Asked about it herself, Ms. Wang blinks in the gloom of her walled concrete yard. "I never thought that my feet were beautiful," she says. "I was just told to do it. It's certainly not convenient."

Mr. Yang's book includes photos of Liuyi women's bare feet. The gnarled pink flesh, with the heel twisted into a hoof, calls to mind a pork knuckle.

"We see these old women and maybe their feet look ugly," says Mr. Yang. "But as a young woman, their feet must have been beautiful." In fact, most men saw only the shoes, which then became eroticized objects. To squeeze the tip of a woman's slipper was an act of sexual provocation, akin to a furtive grope.

The last assembly line for lotus shoes closed in Harbin in 1999. The shoe factory had been making only 300 pairs a year, according to Ms. Ko, the Chinese history professor.

Almost all bound-feet women, though, made their own shoes from cloth, occasionally buying sturdier factory-made pairs as outdoor wear. Most still take great pride in their handicraft. Sewing a flower onto a cloth shoe takes three or four days; a completed shoe may be a month's labor.

A few hours south of Liuyi, the well-preserved town of Tuanshan sits on a gentle rise. Settled during the Ming dynasty, it also prospered from trade after a French-built railroad to Vietnam opened in the late 19th century.

In a courtyard beside a pomegranate tree, three elderly women examine a paper pattern for a shoe from Liuyi. One, Luo Guiying, 80, unimpressed, takes a pair of scissors to a newspaper to cut a pattern of her own, then pulls out a box of hand-sewn lotus shoes that she plans to sell to tourists. A scarlet pair adorns her shrunken feet.

Xiong Xiufeng, 90, smiles at her entrepreneurial friend and tells her own story. Her father died young, leaving eight children. When she was 5, her mother began binding her feet. At night, the pain was so intense that she couldn't sleep, but when she tried to remove the binding cloth, her mother beat her with a stick and warned her that she would never get married.

At 14, she married a tin miner from a respectable family, with whom she had six children. By then, foot-binding was on the way out. Ms. Xiong says she never thought of binding her daughters' feet, as her mother had bound hers. "My feet belong to the old society. My daughters were born into a new society," she says.

Ms. Xiong's circle is quickly dwindling. The oldest woman in the village, Ma Youzhen, 93, had just passed away. She was one of five bound-feet woman living in Tuanshan, and now only four remain. Ms. Ma was buried in a hillside grave. Her friends mourned her. They made paper money to burn at her funeral so she would have funds in the afterlife. And they wondered who would be next.

Simon Montlake is a writer based in Bangkok.

WSJ.com

▶ To see more photos, click on **Asia.WSJ.com**.

Above, three of the town of Tuanshan's four remaining bound-feet women: Luo Guiying, Zhu Xiaoquiong and Xiong Xiufeng; right, Wang Guifeng of Liuyi village with one of her spare pairs of shoes.

A street in Liuyi, still home to perhaps 20 or 30 bound-feet women

The Yunnan trail

Hiking in the steps of the great 1920s explorer Joseph Rock

By Peter Ritter

What an intriguing figure he must have been, this stern, solitary foreigner in suit, tie and pith helmet, riding into the mountains of Yunnan.

When Joseph Rock is remembered at all today, it is as a botanist and ethnographer. His two-volume history of Yunnan's Naxi minority is still consulted by academics, while the more than 80,000 plant specimens he collected in the wildest corners of China stock arboretums throughout Europe and the U.S.

Yet in the 1920s and '30s, Rock was famous as National Geographic magazine's "man in China," whose accounts of fighting off bandits and discovering lost mountain kingdoms thrilled a generation of readers. And in remote northwest Yunnan, an area Rock put on the map—sometimes literally—it is still possible to follow in the great explorer's footsteps.

Rock lived for nearly two decades beneath the 5,600-meter Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, close to the town of Lijiang. He described it in 1925 as a "conglomeration of mud huts and a market place," but it has reinvented itself since a 1996 earthquake as one of Yunnan's most popular tourist destinations, with an old town of cobbled lanes, guesthouses and restaurants. Perhaps also for the benefit of tourists, many of the local Naxi women wear traditional outfits, with their stiff leather star-emblazoned capes.

For the trek through Tiger Leaping Gorge, a route Rock helped make famous with a 1926 article, most hikers begin in Qiatou, about two hours north of Lijiang by minibus. There trails snake up the mountainside and into a silent alpine wilderness of jack pine and wildflowers before falling into a hidden valley and a tiny Naxi village surrounded by peach orchards and fields of barley.

Hikers can break for the night at the Naxi Family Guesthouse, a lovely, inexpensive place run, as the name suggests, by a village family. In the morning, the matron of the house will fill travelers' backpacks with apples and strawberries. From there a trail climbs steeply out of the valley and into the parched, starkly beautiful landscape of the gorge proper. Far below, the Yangtze River, here known as the Jinsha, makes its first turn and drives east into the Chinese heartland.

These days, the trails are helpfully marked with red arrows, and a clean, cheap guesthouse bed is never more than a few hours' away. In all, the hike can be done in about eight to 10 hours, though of course it varies with pace and the trails chosen. It ends in Walnut Garden, which offers both places to stay and buses back to Lijiang.

In Rock's day, an expedition into these mountains was more ambitious. Accounts of one trip have him accompanied by 190 soldiers for protection from bandits, a cook trained in the cuisine of his native Austria and 26 pack mules to carry scientific and photographic equipment and the tokens of civilization that Rock demanded on the road. (These included a gold table service, a collapsible bathtub and a phonograph on which he sometimes played opera for baffled villagers.)

Rock cultivated a certain imperial swagger. Under his neat suit, he wore twin Colt .45 revolvers. According to a 1999 National Geographic article, he once explained to an acquaintance, "You've got to make people believe you're someone of importance if you want to live in these wilds."

The locals, not knowing quite what to make of him, called him *luo boshi*: Dr. Rock. But in fact Rock had only a high-school education. He'd become fascinated with China after a boyhood visit to a Vienna museum, and had taught himself Chinese, along with a half-dozen other languages. At age 18, he'd fled home to drift across the globe, alighting briefly several times before settling in Hawaii, where he took up botany as a vocation.

Rock became a U.S. citizen, and in 1921 the U.S. Department of Agriculture sent him to Asia to search for the rare chaulmoogra tree, thought to hold a cure for leprosy. That same year he approached the National Geographic Society to back further explorations, and in 1923 he was made leader of the society's Yunnan Province Expedition. He would stay in Asia for most of the next 30 years.

There are still elders around Lijiang with firsthand memories of him. One is Xuan Ke, director of the Naxi orchestra, which plays nightly in a restored theater in Lijiang, specializing in a style of Tang Dynasty temple music otherwise lost in China. Mr. Xuan's father was Rock's first translator and guide.

"My father always said, 'Be careful when that man comes around.' We were frightened of him," Mr. Xuan remembers. "He was a short man, with a red neck and white hair. Very German. But always an angry man, shouting everywhere." Mr. Xuan recalls Rock storming into the family's kitchen and demanding tea. Indeed, he visited the family frequently, even taking portraits, including one of Xuan Ke as an infant.

Rock's home, down a quiet lane in the village of Yuhu—"charmingly situated, if not overclean," Rock called it—draws relatively few visitors, but the caretaker, once awakened, is willing to open it up. It still houses a jumbled display of Rock's belongings, including a battered rucksack and an old shotgun.

"I want to die among those beautiful mountains rather than in a bleak hospital bed all alone," Rock once wrote to a friend. Alas, it was not to be. China's tumult, held at bay for centuries by Yunnan's imposing mountains, finally swept away Rock's Shangri-la. With Japanese bombs falling, Rock packed up his work and dispatched it to the U.S. It never arrived; a torpedo sent the cargo, including a dictionary of the Naxi language Rock had compiled, to the bottom of the sea. When Communist forces took nearby Lijiang in 1949, Rock himself departed, to spend his final heartbroken years in Hawaii.

Upstairs, in a gloomy low-ceilinged loft, Rock's bedroom is preserved much as he left it, with a narrow single bed and simple writing desk. On the wall hangs a picture of Rock in happier times—his neatly combed hair white, his neck thickened with middle age and his expression, as always, as forbidding and forlorn as the mountains he loved.

Peter Ritter is a writer based in Hong Kong.

Peter Ritter

From the top, Lijiang's old town was rescued after a 1996 earthquake damaged much of the city; its features include shallow winding canals; the village of Baisha lies several kilometers from Joseph Rock's former home.

Trip planner

Getting there

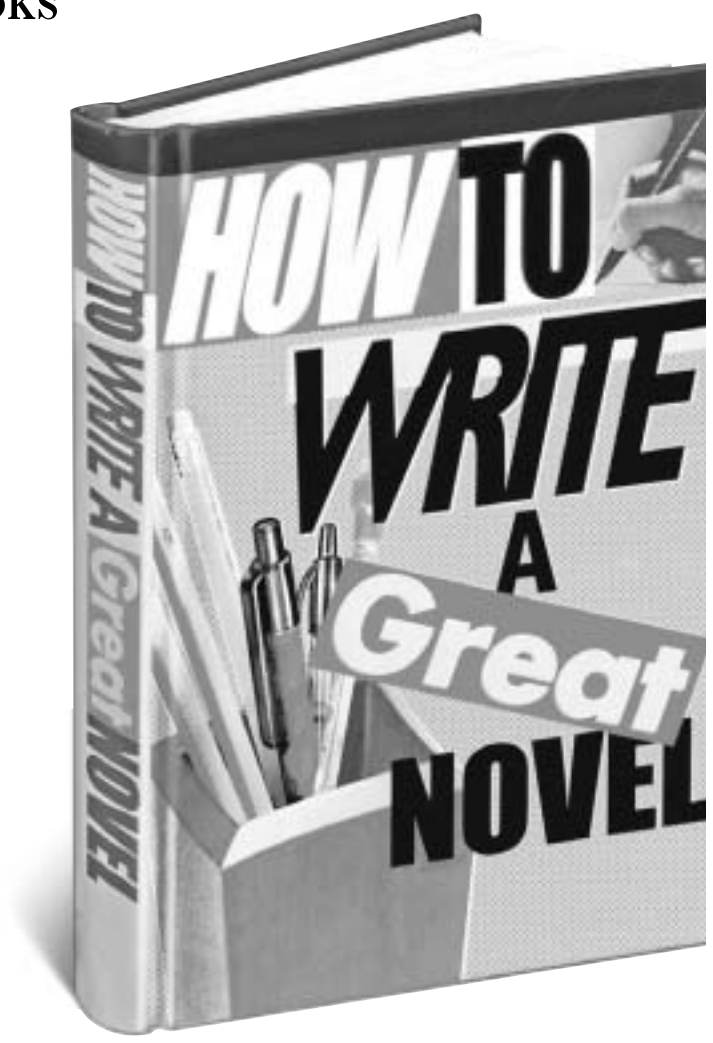
China Eastern and China Southern airlines both offer frequent flights between Lijiang and major Chinese cities. The best season for the Tiger Leaping Gorge hike—which is steep in places, but overall not too strenuous—may be March to May, when the flowers are prettiest. (There's a crush of tourists during national holidays.) Many hikers begin in Qiatou, two hours north of Lijiang. Simply take any minibus headed for the Tibetan town of Shangri-La (as renamed by local tourism authorities), and get off at Qiatou.

Where to stay

Lijiang's old town has dozens of cozy guesthouses, many of which cost less than $20 a night. The trek can be made in one grueling day, but most hikers choose to spend at least one night at a guesthouse along the trail. Among the best is the Naxi Family Guesthouse, which has clean, simple rooms for $17. Walnut Garden, the picturesque village at the end of the trail, also has a number of places to sleep, including the popular Sean's Guesthouse, where doubles cost around $50 a night.

WSJ.com

▶ To see more photos, click on **Asia.WSJ.com**.



By Alexandra Alter

Richard Powers lounges in bed all day and speaks his novels aloud to a laptop computer with voice-recognition software. Junot Díaz, author of the Pulitzer-prize winning novel "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao," shuts himself in the bathroom and perches on the edge of the tub with his notebook when he's tackling a knotty passage. Hilary Mantel, whose Tudor drama "Wolf Hall" claimed this year's Man Booker Prize, jumps in the shower when she gets stuck. "The number of pages I've got that are watermarked, I can't tell you," Ms. Mantel said.

An unusually robust crop of books from some of the biggest names in literature has landed this autumn. Kazuo Ishiguro, Orhan Pamuk, Mr. Powers and Nicholson Baker have new books out, along with a host of other prominent authors.

Behind the scenes, many of these writers say they struggle with the daily work of writing, clocking thousands of solitary hours staring at blank pages and computer screens. Most agree on common hurdles: procrastination, writer's block, the terror of failure that looms over a new project and the attention-sucking power of the Internet.

A few authors bristle when asked the inevitable question about how they write. Richard Ford declined to reveal his habits, explaining in an email that those are "the questions I hope no one asks me after readings and lectures." Others revel in spilling minute details, down to their preferred brand of pen (Amitav Ghosh swears by black-ink Pelikan pens) or font size (Anne Rice uses 14-point Courier; National Book Award finalist Colum McCann sometimes uses eight-point Times New Roman, forcing himself to squint at the tiny type). Some now offer fans a window into the process, reporting on their progress on blogs and Twitter feeds. On his author Web site, John Irving describes how he begins his novels by writing the last sentence first.

Here is how a range of leading authors describe their approach to writing—a process that can be lonely, tedious, frustrating and exhilarating.

NICHOLSON BAKER

Most days, Nicholson Baker rises at 4 a.m. to write at his home in Maine. With the lights off, he sets his laptop screen to black and the text to gray, so that the darkness is uninterrupted. After a couple of hours, he goes back to bed, then rises at 8:30 to edit his work.

He wrote his first novel, "The Mezzanine," by dictating to a voice recorder during his commute to work. For his recent novel "The Anthologist," whose first-person narrator is a frustrated poet struggling to write the introduction to a new anthology, he grew a beard to resemble his character, put on a floppy brown hat, and videotaped himself giving poetry lectures. Creating the voice of a rambling professor "was something I had to work on a lot in order to get the feeling of being sloppy," said Mr. Baker. Even then, he decided the first draft was too orderly. So he divided the novel into numbered sections, then went to a random- number generating Web site and arranged the chunks according to the random order it gave him. It was a total mess. He had to return to the original order, although a few random bits worked. "I had to claw myself back to the old way," he said.

MARGARET ATWOOD

"Put your left hand on the table. Put your right hand in the air. If you stay that way long enough, you'll get a plot," Margaret Atwood says when asked where her ideas come from. When questioned about whether she's ever used that approach, she adds, "No, I don't have to."

Ms. Atwood, who has written 13 novels, as well as poetry, short stories and nonfiction works, rarely gets writer's block. When ideas hit her, she scribbles phrases and notes on napkins, restaurant menus, in the margins of newspapers. She starts with a rough notion of how the story will develop, "which usually turns out to be wrong," she says. She moves back and forth between writing longhand and on the computer. When a narrative arc starts to take shape, she prints out chapters and arranges them in piles on the floor, and plays with the order by moving piles around.

Twice, she's abandoned books after a couple of hundred pages, once in the late 1960s and another time in the early 1980s. She was able to salvage a single sentence from one book, and carved two short stories out of the other, including one titled "The Whirlpool Rapids."

During a career that has spanned more than 40 years, Ms. Atwood has gone from cutting and pasting passages with scissors and tape to the communication of the electronic age. Lately, she's been blogging and using Twitter while on tour promoting her recent novel, "The Year of the Flood."

DAN CHAON

Dan Chaon writes a first draft on color-coded note cards he buys at Office Max. Ideas for his books come to him as images and phrases rather than plots, characters or settings, he says. He begins by jotting down imagery, with no back story in mind. He keeps turning the images over in his mind until characters and themes emerge.

His most recent novel, "Await Your Reply," which has three interlocking narratives about identity theft, started out as scattered pictures of a lighthouse on a prairie, a car driving into the arctic tundra under a midnight sun and a boy and his father driving to the hospital at night with the boy's severed hand, resting on ice. He described each scene on a card, then began fleshing out the plotlines, alternating among blue, pink and green cards when he moved between narratives.

During the early stages of writing, he carries a pocketful of cards with him wherever he goes; as they accumulate, he stores them in a card catalog that he bought at a library

sale. It often takes two years before something resembling a novel takes shape. He eventually transcribes the cards onto the computer and writes furiously from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m.

"I used to think my average as a short-story writer was one completed story out of every 20," says Mr. Chaon, who adds that his average has improved as he's gained experience. "I have at least two novels that I think are dead—maybe three if the thing I'm working on right now sputters to a stop."

ORHAN PAMUK

Turkish novelist and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk often rewrites the first line of his novels 50 or 100 times. "The hardest thing is always the first sentence—that is painful," says Mr. Pamuk, whose book, "The Museum of Innocence," a love story set in 1970s Istanbul, came out last month.

Mr. Pamuk writes by hand, in graph-paper notebooks, filling a page with prose and leaving the adjacent page blank for revisions, which he inserts with dialogue-like balloons. He sends his notebooks to a speed typist who returns them as typed manuscripts; then he marks the pages up and sends them back to be retyped. The cycle continues three or four times.

Mr. Pamuk says he writes anywhere inspiration strikes—on airplanes, in hotel rooms, on a park bench. He's not given to bursts of spontaneity, though, when it comes to plot and story structure. "I plan everything," Mr. Pamuk says.

EDWIDGE DANTICAT

Before she begins a novel, Edwidge Danticat creates a collage on a bulletin board in her office, tacking up photos she's taken on trips to her native Haiti and images she clips from magazines ranging from Essence to National Geographic. Ms. Danticat, who works out of her home in Florida, says she adapted the technique from storyboarding, which filmmakers use to map out scenes. "I like the tactile process. There's something old-fashioned about it, but what we do is kind of old-fashioned," she says.

Sometimes, the collage grows large enough to fill four bulletin boards. As the plot becomes clearer, she culls pictures and shrinks the visual map to a single board.

Right now, Ms. Danticat has two boards full of images depicting a seaside town in Haiti, the setting for a new novel that takes place in a village based on the one where her mother grew up.

She writes first drafts in flimsy blue exam notebooks that she orders from an online office-supply store. She often uses 100 exam books for a draft. "The company I order from must think I'm a high school," she said. She types the draft on the computer and begins revising and cutting.

Finally, she makes a tape recording of herself reading the entire novel aloud—a trick she learned from Walter Mosley—and revises passages that cause her to stumble.

KAZUO ISHIGURO

From the time he was a teenager until his mid-20s, novelist Kazuo Ishiguro tried, unsuccessfully, to make it as a songwriter. That helped him to develop his style of spare, first-person narration where the narrator seems to know more than he or she lets on at first.

Mr. Ishiguro, author of six novels, including the Booker-prize winning "Remains of the Day," typically spends two years researching a novel and a year writing it. Since his novels are written in the first person, the voice is crucial, so he "auditions" narrators by writing a few chapters from different characters' points of view. Before he begins a draft, he compiles folders of notes and flow charts that lay out not just the plot but also more subtle aspects of the narrative, such as a character's emotions or memories.

Obsessive preparation "gives me the opportunity to have my narrators suppress meaning and evade meaning when they say one thing and mean something else," says Mr. Ishiguro.

He collects his notes in binders and writes a first draft by hand. He edits with a pencil, then types the revised version into a computer, where he further refines it, sometimes deleting chunks as large as 100 pages.

In spite of all the groundwork, some novels fail to come together, including one that took place in medieval Britain. "I showed my wife a segment that I had honed down and she said, 'This is awful. You have to figure out how they speak to each other. They're speaking in a moron language,'" he says.

HILARY MANTEL

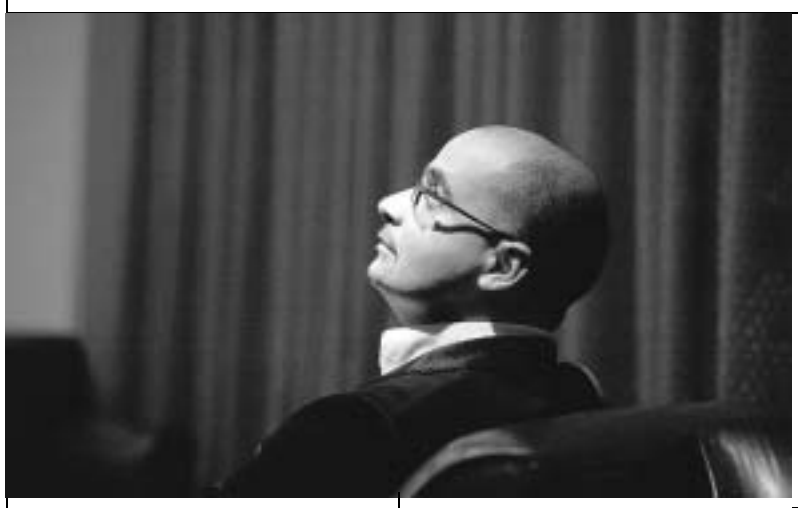
British novelist Hilary Mantel likes to write first thing in the morning, before she has uttered a word or had a sip of coffee. She usually jots down ideas and notes about her dreams. "I get very jangled if I can't do it," she says.

She's an obsessive note taker and always carries a notebook. Odd phrases, bits of dialogue and descriptions that come to her get tacked to a two-meter-tall bulletin board in her kitchen; they remain there until Ms. Mantel finds a place for them in her narrative.

Ms. Mantel spent five years researching and writing the book, "Wolf Hall," her Booker Prize-winning Tudor drama set in the court of Henry VIII, out in the U.S. this month. The trickiest part was trying to match her version to the historical record. To avoid contradicting history, she created a card catalog, organized alphabetically by character. Each card contained notes showing where a particular historical figure—such as protagonist Thomas Cromwell, Henry's adviser—was on relevant dates.

"You really need to know, where is the Duke of Suffolk at the moment? You can't have him in London if he's supposed to be somewhere else," she says.

One day, she was in a panic over how she would fit everything she needed into the novel. She took a shower—her usual head-clearing ritual. "I burst out of the shower crying 'It's two books!'" says Ms. Mantel, who is writing a sequel that will end with Cromwell's beheading in 1540.



JUNOT DÍAZ

"I think 90% of my ideas evaporate because I have a terrible memory and because I seem to be committed to not scribble anything down," says Junot Díaz. "As soon as I write it down, my mind rejects it."

Juggling everything in his head has drawbacks, one of which is writing very slowly, he says. He threw out two earlier versions of his novel, "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao"—the equivalent of about 600 pages—before the final version began to take shape. He also researches obsessively.

When writing "Oscar Wao," he read J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy half a dozen times to get inside the head of his protagonist, an overweight Dominican teenager who's obsessed with fantasy and science fiction.

He often listens to orchestral movie soundtracks as he writes, because he's easily distracted by lyrics. When he needs to seal himself off from the world, he retreats into the bathroom and sits on the edge of the tub. "It drove my ex crazy," he says. "She would always know I was going to write because I would grab a notebook and run into the bathroom."

KATE CHRISTENSEN

Kate Christensen was two years and 150 pages into her first novel, "In the Drink," about a boozy ghostwriter, before she discovered what the book was really about—so she dismantled the draft, threw out a bunch of pages and started over. The process repeated itself with her second, third and fourth novels, she says. With her 2009 novel "Trouble," a story about two women who go on a Thelma and Louise-like adventure to Mexico, the opening finally stuck.

Ms. Christensen, who works out of her home in Tribeca in New York, says a lot of her writing time is spent "not writing." Most mornings, she does housework, writes emails and talks on the phone to avoid facing her work. In the past, she's played 30 games of solitaire before typing a first sentence.

Last month, she started a new novel, titled "The Astral," about a 57-year-old poet in Brooklyn who has been kicked out by his wife and is trying to get his son out of a mind-control cult. "At the beginning, which is where I am now, there is always a certain amount of trepidation because the thing doesn't have a life of its own yet," says Ms. Christensen, who won the PEN/Faulkner Award last year.

MICHAEL ONDAATJE

Booker-prize winner Michael Ondaatje's preferred medium is 21-by-28-centimeter Muji-brand lined notebooks. He completes the first three or four drafts by hand, sometimes literally cutting and pasting passages and whole chapters with scissors and tape. Some pages have four layers underneath.

Words come easily for the author—the bulk of the work is arranging and rewriting sentences. "I don't understand this whole concept of writer's block," says Mr. Ondaatje, who says he is working on a novel at the moment but declines to elaborate. "If I get stuck, I work on another scene."

Mr. Ondaatje, who started out as a poet, says plots often come to him as "a glimpse of a small situation." His 1992 novel "The English Patient" started out as two images: one of a patient lying in bed talking to a nurse, and another of a thief stealing a photograph of himself.

Sometimes he goes through an "anarchic" stage, cutting characters or rearranging scenes. "Some writers know what the last sentence is going to be before they begin—I don't even know what the second sentence is going to be," says Mr. Ondaatje, whose most recent novel, "Divisadero," came out in 2007.

RICHARD POWERS

Richard Powers, whose books are often concept-driven, intricately plotted and stuffed with arcane science, wrote his last three novels while lying in bed, speaking to a laptop computer with voice-recognition software.

To write "Generosity," his recent novel about the search for a happiness gene, he worked like this for eight or nine hours a day. He uses a stylus pen to edit on a touch screen, rewriting sentences and highlighting words.

"It's recovering storytelling by voice and recovering the use of the hand and all that tactile immediacy," Mr. Powers says of the process. "I like to use different parts of my brain."

Writers Pictures (Mantel, Pamuk, Powers, Ondaatje); Corbis Outline (Díaz, Christensen); Corbis (Atwood, Baker); South Florida Sun-Sentinel/MCT/Newscom (Danticat); Reuters (Ishiguro); Philip Chaon (Chaon)

DISTINCTIVE PROPERTIES & ESTATES

UNITED STATES

FOR SALE

Two Large Residential
Properties in Southwest FL/USA
One Penthouse & One Family Home
Information on website
http://gft.softrim.us/ or call Cal at
239-992-8711

SWITZERLAND

GENEVA SWITZERLAND

Apartment to rent,
newly renovated penthouse,
200 sq metres, 3 bedrooms,
1 garage, private garden,
pool within the residence
14,000 Swiss Francs per month.

Tel: 0041227865623 /
Fax: 0041227865645

UNITED STATES

Brandywine Fine Properties | Sotheby's International Realty

"THE" Eastern Shore of Maryland waterfront estate w/ unparalleled Development or Estate opportunities; 556 acres w/107 Recorded Lots w/38000 ft Estate; revised Master Plan w/ Branded Sporting Club, Estate w/huge Conservation credits. Serious Inquiries Only 1.302.275.0869 Virtual Tour: http://bfpsothebysrealty.com/tours/bracebridgehallmls

Distinctive Properties & Estates
for more information call,
Call: (852) 2831-2553
(65) 6415-4279 *or* (813) 3292-4151

CHEAP AMERICAN LAND
www.VacantLandAmerica.com
or phone
912-729-5544

de gustibus / *By Eric Felten*

Sadder But Wiser

No one ever went broke encouraging Americans to be cheerful. Grinning (whether in conjunction with bearing it or not) has ever been our fashion; our national passion for cosmetic dentistry may have something to do with how much we smile. Where else would a founding credo declare the pursuit of happiness to be an unalienable right?

But what if happiness isn't everything it's cracked up to be? Barbara Ehrenreich's new book, "Bright-Sided," decries how we're always getting an earful to be cheerful. Ms. Ehrenreich argues that the American insistence on the power of positive thinking is a snare, a delusion, a destructive affectation. Hers is a decidedly contrarian position, but new research from Joseph Forgas, a professor of psychology at Australia's University of New South Wales, bolsters her thesis. Sometimes, he finds, it pays to be sad.

That's a hard notion for us to grasp, committed as we are to the idea that happiness is more than just pleasure-seeking. We believe that happiness makes us productive, confident and capable. Pick up a self-help book at random and chances are that you'll find florid encomiums to happiness and the benefits it bestows. Take "What Happy Women Know": Authors Dan Baker and Cathy Greenberg chirp, "We know from research that happier people are more successful, more hardworking, more socially engaged—and healthier—than those who are less happy." Happiness isn't just pleasant; it "is actually good for you."

But what if that isn't true—or at least, not entirely so? Mr. Forgas argues, in the current issue of the journal Australasian Science, that negativity can be downright positive. His experiments, in which subjects are rendered happy or sad (usually by watching movie clips, cheerful or baleful) and then given various sorts of mental calisthenics to perform, suggest that a "mild negative mood" can result in a raft of cognitive benefits. For example, a bad attitude makes us more critical of what we are told and less easily duped.

The research is an effort to make sense of sadness, an emotion that has long perplexed social psychologists. The evolutionary biological types have been able to make sense of the more vivid negative emotions: Anger, fear and disgust all have obvious roles in survival, informing us when to fight, when to flee and when to stop gobbling putrid food. But there is no obvious way in which sadness gives us a Darwinian edge. Melancholy has been seen as an emotional equivalent of the appendix—not necessarily good for anything in particular, and quite possibly lethal. And so we go to great lengths to banish sadness, treating it as a illness to be eradicated.

But Mr. Forgas has discovered that sadness is more useful than has been imagined. Not only can a mild malaise keep us from being bamboozled, but we are more perceptive and have sharper, more accurate recall when we're down in the dumps. The professor tested people on their ability to remember items viewed on a cluttered table. On a dreary, drizzly day, people "had better eyewitness memory for what they saw" than those tested "on a bright, sunny day."

Agence France-Presse

He's no dupe.

Even more surprising is the finding that we are better able to marshal facts and persuade others when we're feeling blue. "Negative mood," Mr. Forgas writes, "can promote a more concrete and detailed processing style."

No doubt deep depression can be debilitating. But perhaps a nip or two from the "black dog," as Winston Churchill described his own depressive tendencies, isn't entirely harmful, and may even contribute to a talent for persuasive argumentation.

On the other hand, consider Icelanders. Until recently, they were as happy as they come. The island nation regularly ranks near or at the top of the World Database of Happiness, a survey maintained by Ruut Veenhoven of Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The Icelandic mood may have been knocked down a peg or two by the collapse of the country's economy, but that may not be such a bad thing. Could it be that Iceland's positive disposition is what got it into such a mess in the first place? If a dour mood dispels credulity, then where better to peddle monumental scams than in a nation awash in good feelings?

But that may be a bridge too far. Mr. Forgas's studies only point to the effects of short-term moods. Whether you're chronically chipper or a perennial grouch, chances are that you will be more attentive and perspicacious when you are a little sadder than is your norm. This has both implications and applications. If one has a difficult and complicated negotiation scheduled for the day—one in which the greatest imperative is not to get snookered by some seemingly innocuous contractual provision—it might pay to put oneself in a mild funk. The method-acting crowd long ago perfected the technique of dredging up memories of life's awful moments to produce compelling stage tears. A similar technique could have business applications. A maudlin and well-timed musing on the death of your childhood dog could save the company millions.

On the flip side, a salesman looking to close a deal should do his best to induce a warm wave of good feelings. Remember, a happy customer is a rather less critical customer. The customer may want to adopt a crotchety counter-strategy akin to the old saw about not going grocery shopping when hungry: Don't do any sort of shopping when you're cheery. Perhaps Alan Greenspan didn't take it far enough—maybe all exuberance is irrational.

Mr. Forgas doesn't argue that sadness is always the right mood for the task at hand: "Positive mood seems to promote creativity, flexibility, cooperation, and reliance on mental shortcuts," he writes. But when attention to detail and gimlet-eyed appraisal are critical, the grumps have it. I think Mr. Forgas is on to something. Bliss, you could say, is ignorance. Then again, you have to take my judgment on the professor's work with a grain of salt—I was in a pretty good mood when I read it.

Write to ericfelten@wsjtaste.com.

Masterpiece / *By Barbara Jepson*

Struggle and Triumph

The first symphony by Johannes Brahms took about 14 years to complete and generated one of the most commonly cited remarks in music history. "I shall never write a symphony," he had told a friend after a decade of effort. "You can't have any idea what it's like to hear such a giant marching behind you." The "giant" was undoubtedly Beethoven, whose groundbreaking Fifth and Ninth symphonies were tough acts to follow. A prediction by Robert Schumann, that a symphony by his protege Brahms "would mark the rebirth of Romanticism at its highest level," surely added to the pressure.

> In the First Symphony, Brahms's experience shows.

Yet in the magnificent "C Minor Symphony," which had its premiere in his native Germany in 1876, Brahms not only overcame self-doubt but further imbued Classical symphonic form with the rapid mood shifts and ardent longing of German Romanticism. Endowed with remarkable thematic richness and unity, the C Minor Symphony is music of struggle and triumph, from its yearning opening for strings over a pounding timpani to its jubilant conclusion. Indeed, ambiguity pervades this 45-minute work. In "The Symphony," Michael Steinberg's reference guide, the author recalls a rehearsal of the C Minor's first movement in which conductor Herbert Blomstedt asked the San Francisco Symphony to "think of flowers straining to break through concrete."

A touchstone of the orchestral repertoire, the First Symphony of Brahms experienced both immediate and enduring success. One year after its unveiling in Karlsruhe, Germany, the work received its U.S. premiere. Within a week, two additional American orchestras presented it as well. During the next decade, it was performed in many European cities; an early incarnation of the Berlin Philharmonic played all four Brahms symphonies during its first three years of existence.

Still, the First Symphony had its detractors. In the years prior to its arrival, the sprawling symphonic poems of Liszt and forward-looking harmonic language of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde," which eroded the traditional sense of tonal center, had heralded new directions for composers. The C Minor Symphony of Brahms was deemed reactionary by some observers for its four-part structure and use of sonata form. Influences of Schubert, Schumann and Wagner are discernible, but these pale in comparison to the First's homage to Beethoven. Brahms employed the same key Beethoven chose for his Fifth Symphony—an act of tribute or a bold attempt to engage his idol *mano a mano*. And in the Allegro section of the C Minor's finale, Brahms provided a first theme that evokes the "Ode to Joy" of Beethoven's Ninth. Those who commented on the resemblance after the First's premiere received an oft-cited Brahmsian reply: "Any ass can see that."

"Sometimes willingly, sometimes not," states the New Grove Dictionary of Music, "Brahms became a lightning rod in the major musical-aesthetic tempest of the later 19th century. He was cast in direct opposition to the Lisztians and Wagnerites; his preferred genres of chamber music, lieder and symphony were set against the more modern forms of music drama and symphonic poem."

But in later decades, the symphonies of Brahms were hailed as progressive by the philosopher Theodor Adorno and the composer Arnold Schoenberg, father of modern music, who admired Brahms's ability to spin themes and even entire compositions from a few small motifs. His harmonic vocabulary was also imaginative. British critic Richard Osborne, in his liner notes for the Berlin Philharmonic recording, says that Brahms went "further than Beethoven in establishing tonal relationships in and between movements, and he knew he could develop the use of chromatic harmonies [which tended to emphasize dissonance or delay its resolution] while reaffirming rather than destabilising the tonal system itself."

Rising above the vagaries of musical politics is the lasting achievement of the C Minor Symphony itself, by turns turbulent, tender, agitated, solemn, rhythmically propulsive or gently lyrical. One beautiful melodic idea flows out of another. Particularly notable is a serene horn solo heard in the introduction to the Finale. Echoed by the flute, it leads to an expansive four-bar chorale uttered by the trombones. Both melodies are later repeated by the orchestra, leading to a buoyant and majestic conclusion. An undercurrent of deep longing runs through the symphony, like a stream that periodically disappears from view, then bubbles to the surface.

Brahms was born in Hamburg in 1833; his mother was 17 years older than his father. At 20, he quickly fell in love with Schumann's 34-year-old wife, Clara, a pianist, composer and mother of eight. After Schumann's death about three years later, the two traveled together and then parted. Their artistic friendship continued for 43 years, mainly through correspondence. Brahms remained single and died in 1897 at the age of 63, 11 months after Clara Schumann. It was to her that Brahms sent an early version of the C Minor's first movement.

By age 43, when Brahms completed the C Minor Symphony, he was already enjoying success as a pianist, composer and periodic conductor. For many composers, first symphonies are youthful works, more significant for their promise than any realization of greatness. But in the First Symphony of Brahms, the years of experience show. After the work's premiere, its perfectionist composer made further revisions. The next three symphonies then followed in relatively quick succession. The creative impasse had been broken, and inspiration flowed.

Ms. Jepson writes about classical music and art for the Journal.

Pepper . . . and Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"Forget communicating with the dead. Can you bring back a lost 401(k)?"

time off

by William Westbrook

Beijing

EXHIBITION

Breaking Forecast: A show of new and recent work by "eight key figures of China's new generation of artists"—including Cao Fei, Liu Weiand Zheng Guogu—takes the form of eight separate solo shows, fit together like an intricate puzzle and filling the museum's exhibition halls and common spaces with painting, sculpture, installations and photography.

Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District; Nov. 17 to Feb. 28, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., closed Mondays.
Admission: 15 yuan.
☎ 86-10-8459-9269
Web: www.ucca.org.cn

Hong Kong

EXHIBITION

Spain Now: An 80-photograph look at what makes Spain what it is today, including fast trains, windmills (both high-tech and old-style), soccer and Penelope Cruz. The themes are the country's evolution since it joined the European Union in 1986 and its relations with China and Hong Kong. The photos come from the archives of the news agency Agencia EFE.

Sheung Wan Civic Centre, Sheung Wan Municipal Services Building, 345 Queen's Rd., Central; to Nov. 22, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Free admission.
☎ 852-2525-3041
Web: www.lcsd.gov.hk

Macau

DANCE

Spanish National Ballet: Among dance companies with the word "ballet" in the name, this one has stood out during its 30 years for its devotion to preserving national styles—such as escuela bolera and flamenco—and showing them off to the world. The program here includes "La Leyenda" ("The Legend") by José Antonio, the company's artistic director, an homage to the late flamenco great Carmen Amaya.

Grand Auditorium, Macao Cultural Centre, Ave. Xian Xing Hai, Nape; Nov. 25 and 26, 8 p.m.
Admission: 180 patacas and 220 patacas.
☎ 853-2840-0555
Web: www.ccm.gov.mo

Singapore

CONCERT

Singapore Symphony Orchestra: A chance to get your Beethoven money's worth. The program includes not just two symphonies—the lively, well-loved seventh and the eighth, whose delights go somewhat underappreciated in the shade between the seventh and ninth—but also the fourth piano concerto, yet another favorite. The soloist will be Mari Kodama, very accurately summed up as an international pianist (born in Osaka, raised in Paris, now a San Franciscan). Music director Lan Shui will conduct.

Esplanade Concert Hall, 1 Esplanade Drive; Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m.
Admission: S$11 to S$75.
☎ 65-6348-5555
Web: www.sistic.com

Marina Chavez (Green Day); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art ('W-IOW'); Spanish National Ballet

Above, Beijing: 'W-IOW' by Liu Wei, one of eight artists featured in the exhibition 'Breaking Forecast'; right, Macau: The Spanish National Ballet dances 'La Leyenda'; below, Green Day's world tour hits Australia and Asia.

Tour: Asia

CONCERT

Rain: One thing Jeong Ji-hoon has accomplished by calling himself "Rain" is to make it easier to create album titles and tour names, though he's ratcheting it up this time, with "Legend of Rainism" (the previous tours were "Rainy Day" and "Rain's Coming"). In the best Asian pop-star style, he's not just a singer with a few million-selling albums behind him but an actor (in a couple of hit Korean TV series) and now a clothing designer (and his own model). He even got what looked like a big break in Hollywood last year, but the movie turned out to be "Speed Racer." Oops. Rain played Taejo Togokahn.

Hong Kong: AsiaWorld-Arena, AsiaWorld-Expo, Hong Kong International Airport, Lantau; Nov. 28 and 29, 8 p.m.
Admission: HK$380 to HK$1,280.
☎ 852-3128-8288
Web: www.hkticketing.com
Jakarta: Jakarta International Event & Convention Center, Mangga Dua Square, 1 Jl. Gunung Sahari Raya; Dec. 3, 8 p.m.
Admission: 750,000 rupiah to 3 million rupiah.
☎ 62-21-6231-1377
Web: www.wproductions.biz

Tour: Asia and Australia

CONCERT

Green Day: For a punk-rock band to last more than 20 years may suggest a lack of conviction, but the Ramones did it (though the members all died in rather short order after the group broke up). Green Day has made some adjustments since the days of its first great success, when the members were in their early 20s and alienation, girls and growing up seemed like suitable themes. Now closer to 40 than 30, they've gone political: Chief songwriter Billy Jo Armstrong describes the latest album, "21st Century Breakdown," as being about selfish manipulation by authority, including government, religion and media. Other stops on this world-wide tour, the band's first in several years, include Perth, Melbourne and Nagoya. A Jan. 21 show in Osaka and a Jan. 23 one in Tokyo are both sold out.

Sydney: Acer Arena, Olympic Boulevard, Sydney Olympic Park; Dec. 11 and 12, 7 p.m.
Admission: A$102.15.
☎ 61-132-849
Web: www.ticketek.com.au
Bangkok: Impact Arena, 99 Popular Rd., T.Banmai, A.Pakkred, Nonthaburi; Jan. 12, 8:30 p.m.
Admission: 800 baht to 2,600 baht.
☎ 66-2262-3456
Web: www.thaiticketmajor.com
Singapore: Singapore Indoor Stadium, 2 Stadium Walk; Jan. 14, 8 p.m.
Admission: S$88 to S$148.
☎ 65-6348-5555
Web: www.sistic.com
Hong Kong: AsiaWorld-Arena, AsiaWorld-Expo, Hong Kong International Airport, Lantau; Jan. 16, 8 p.m.
Admission: HK$350 to HK$750.
☎ 852-3128-8288
Web: ww.hkticketing.com
Tokyo: Saitama Super Arena, 8 Shintoshin, Chuo-ku, Saitama-shi; Jan. 24, 4 p.m.
☎ 81-3-3462-6969
Web: www.creativeman.co.jp

CONCERT

Mika: It's not quite "Rain," but "Mika" is pretty easy to remember, compared with the "Michael Holbrook Penniman" the singer was born with. A sensation within months of his first release, he's celebrated for not sounding like anyone else today—though everyone does seem to agree he sounds like Freddy Mercury. To fans, an homage; to doubters, a ripoff. But on the plus side, Mika does have a three-octave range, and in September he invited fans to join him at his local pub on Portobello Road in London. His Nov. 30 Tokyo show is sold out.

Sydney: Enmore Theatre, 118-132 Enmore Rd., Newtown; Nov. 24, 8 p.m.
Admission: A$89.60.
☎ 61-132-849
Web: www.ticketek.com.au
Hong Kong: HITEC Star Hall, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon; Nov. 26, 8 p.m.
Admission: HK$450 to HK$650.
☎ 852-3128-8288
Web: www. hkticketing.com
Seoul: Melon-Ax Hall, 319-33 Kwangjang-dong, Kwangjin-gu; Nov. 28, 7 p.m.
Admission: 99,000 won.
☎ 82-2-3444-9969
Web: www.ax-korea.com

Man with a message

Woody Harrelson talks about war, warriors and his new movie

By Michelle Kung

Woody Harrelson has plenty of high-profile films to talk about right now. His horror-comedy "Zombieland" was a recent hit at the U.S. box office, and this weekend, he'll be starring in the apocalyptic "2012." He's also wrapped the yet-to-be-released superhero movie "Defendor" and the independent film "Bunraku."

But what he really wants to talk about is a low-budget independent film by a first-time director called "The Messenger," which opens in the U.S. this month. Audiences have so far made it clear they don't want to see films about the Iraq War, but Mr. Harrelson is passionate about the material, and says it's one of the performances he is most proud of.

Despite many humorous moments, "The Messenger" is often hard to watch, and it was hard to act in. "I cried 30 times during the making of this movie, I was so emotionally attached to what was going on," he says. In the film, which was directed by Oren Moverman, who co-wrote the Bob Dylan portrait "I'm Not There," the 48-year-old actor plays Capt. Tony Stone of the Army's Casualty Notification Office, who must teach a soldier just returned from Iraq (played by Ben Foster) the hellish duty of knocking on doors bearing the worst of news.

For research, you, Ben Foster and Oren Moverman took a train to visit soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

That train ride was unforgettable. It was the first time I was meeting Ben and I immediately felt close to him, which is important because it's all about trust in this game. Plus, I was looking pretty raggedy at that moment and wanted to be presentable, so I asked Oren to help me shave the sides of my head. Of course, the shaver ran out of battery juice, so I ended up with half of my head shaved. It looked pretty frightful. I just put on a hat and tried to deal with it.

Given that you were against the Iraq war, what was it like to have the Army supporting this film?

It was a good experience for me because it's one thing to consider yourself propeace, like I consider myself, and quite another to understand what the soldiers are going through. On the film, we had to shoot at Fort Dix and talking to all the guys there just made me really have a lot of respect for the soldiers. I don't love the war, but I do love the warriors I ran into, so it was very important for me philosophically to have that time with them.

Oren kept you and Ben separate from the actors to whom you were delivering casualty notices until the day of shooting. What did you think of that?

It was smart the way Oren decided to shoot that. We didn't know what our blocking was or where the camera would move. Everything was unpredictable, which is probably best for that kind of scenario because a lot of spontaneous things came out of it. Like when I got slapped (by one of the family members), or in the scene with Steve Buscemi (who plays a distraught father). When he was following us as we were heading back to the car, Ben didn't know that he was going to shove him from behind. It was great in the sense that we had no idea what would happen or how he would react to it.

Now that you're nearing 50, how do you feel when you look back on your career?

A while back, I took about five years off. Before then, I was feeling that what I was doing didn't matter that much, given what was going on with the world ecologically. I didn't feel it mattered much to be an actor. But during that time, I really came to appreciate doing what I was doing and felt there was a relevance to it—that important movies can be made, stir debate and help people look at things differently.

Oscilloscope

Woody Harrelson in 'The Messenger'

Knowledge

Understanding

KNOWLEDGE IS VITAL. BUT KNOWLEDGE IS NOTHING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING.

That's why every morning over 300,000 of most successful business leaders in Asia start their day with a comprehensive review of global business news in The Wall Street Journal Asia. Because it is only when you truly understand the issues and the context behind the news that your knowledge and experience come into their own.

Understand your fast changing world

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. ASIA

PRINT ◦ ONLINE ◦ MOBILE